

FACT SHEET

Heaven's Gate Complex

September 12, 2006 8:00 a.m.

For Fire Information: Ted Pettis or Terina Mullen at 208-628-3589

Incident: These lightning-caused wildland fires started 8/21/06
Location: Complex consists of four fires within 15 miles of Riggins, ID
Jurisdiction: NezPerce & Wallowa-Whitman National Forests
Cooperating Agencies: Idaho County Sheriff's Office
Incident Commander: Mark Grant, Northern Rockies Type II Incident Management Team

Current Size: 32,700 acres

Containment: 50%

Injuries to date: 1

Expected Containment Date: 11/15/2006

Status: The Heavens Gate Complex is currently made up of four fires: The **Black Butte Fire** is located in the Gospel-Hump Wilderness east of Riggins and is estimated at **26,000** acres including the Plummer Spot. Two private residences and several outbuildings are potentially threatened. The three fires west of Riggins are in the vicinity of the Seven Devils and Heaven's Gate. The **Green Acres Fire** is estimated at **6,400** acres; **Horse Heaven Fire** is estimated at **60** acres; and **McCrea Creek Fire** is estimated at **240** acres.

Current Resources: Two Type I hotshot crews, two Type II crews, fifteen engines & water tenders, three dozers, six helicopters and 269 total personnel are assigned to the fire. An additional Type I hotshot crew, borrowed from the Meadow Creek Fire, is assisting this incident.

Yesterday's Activities:

- Fire activity increased as warmer temperatures and lower relative humidity moved into the area.
- The Heaven's Gate Lookout has been staffed to monitor fire activity on the three fires west of Riggins. **Green Acres** was active in the west fork of Sheep Creek on the southern flank. **Horse Heaven & McCrea** had light fire activity.
- **Black Butte:** The fire activity became extreme early in the day. Active surface fire with group tree torching and long-range spotting up to one-half mile was observed. The fire spread from Smith Creek through Coffee Can Saddle to the upper reaches of Gasper Creek. Crews had to disengage and retreat to safety zones during this period. A burn out operation was initiated around a protected structure in upper Gasper Creek. Helicopters dropped water to assist the burnout operation. Crews and dozers worked to build a new containment line on Van Ridge, utilizing an old dozer fireline from previous years.

Today's Planned Activities:

- **Green Acres, Horse Heaven, and McCrea:** Green Acres is expected to be active inside the Hells Canyon Wilderness in Sheep Creek. McCrea fire is expected to be active below Trail 101 South.
- **Black Butte:** The goal is to keep all fire growth below Road 394. Crews will complete the Van Ridge containment line in preparation for pending burnout operation, contingent upon weather conditions and fire location. Crews will continue checking for spot fires along the Big Salmon River Road and Road 394 on the western flank. Crews will continue with prepping structures north of Road 394. Additional road closures will be implemented on Roads 221 and 441 for public safety. Motorists traveling on the Big Salmon River Road should expect delays in the Allison Creek area due to the proximity of the fire and the pending burn out.

For further information on fires, visit www.incweb.org or visit the Nez Perce National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/nezperce/gvc/index>

Closure Summary
Last Revised: September 12, 2006
8 a.m.

Due to the Black Butte Fire, a revised area closure was put into effect for public safety on September 2nd for the southwestern one-third of the Gospel Hump Wilderness and adjacent national forests lands. This closure area is generally south of Forest Road 444 and north of the Salmon River. The area is closed west of the Wilderness from the mouth of Kelly Creek on the Salmon River north to Little Slate Saddle then along Forest Road 394 to just east of Florence, tying back into the Wilderness north of Road 9922. The area closure was revised due to the spread of the Black Butte fire westward along the Salmon River.

Road closures were revised west of the Gospel Hump area closure on September 12th for public safety. Road 221 will be closed from the mouth of Allison Creek on the Salmon River Road to its junction with Road 394 at Rubie Creek, north of Florence. A portion of Road 441 south of the junction with Road 536 and Road 536 itself will also be closed. Closure barriers have been placed across roadways and the intersections of these roads. Closure signs have been placed at the respective trailheads.

Due to the Green Acres Fire, an area closure was put in effect September 1st for that portion of the Hells Canyon Wilderness from Windy Saddle north to Forest Road 1819 and west to the Snake River. Trails 124, 140, 58 and 101 north are closed. Trail 101 South is closed to its intersection with Dog Creek.

Seven Devils Road (517) and Seven Devils Campground have been reopened.